

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 0282

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CS, NU
SUBJ: CODEL CHARLES WILSON'S (D-TEXAS) MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
SOMOZA

1. BACKGROUND: CONGRESSMAN CHARLES WILSON TRAVELED TO MANAGUA FROM SAN JOSE 17 JAN FOR ONE DAY VISIT TO RECEIVE EMBASSY BRIEFING ON CURRENT SITUATION AND, AT HIS REQUEST, TO MEET PRIVATELY WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA. REP AND MRS WILSON HAD BEEN IN COSTA RICA WITH CODEL REUSS AND STAYED OVER FEW DAYS FOR VACATION. SOMOZA RECEIVED WILSON PRIVATELY LATE AFTERNOON FOR 1 1/2 HOURS IN APPOINTMENT ARRANGED BY EMBASSY MANAGUA. IT WAS THE THIRD TIME THAT WILSON AND SOMOZA HAVE MET. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING MEETING, WILSON RETURNED TO COSTA RICA. WILSON'S REPORT GIVEN TO POLOFF JOHN MAISTO 18 JAN FOLLOWS.

2. SOMOZA RECEIVED WILSON AT MONTELMAR, HIS COUNTRY HOUSE, WILSON WAS IMPRESSED BY THE NUMBER OF UNIFORMED SECURITY FORCES IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA, WHO LOOKED REALLY CRACK, AND WHO WERE PROUD OF THEIR SHINY, NEW M-16S. THERE WERE ALSO CIMDU SZDUQLY PERSONNEL, TWO OF THEM BURLY AMERICANS. WHILE WILSON AWAITED SOMOZA HE WAS NOT LEFT ALONE, EVEN FOR A WALK ON THE TERRACE TO ADMIRE THE VIEW. WHEN SOMOZA APPEARED, WILSON FOUND HIM TO BE A NEW MAN IN COMPARISON TO THEIR LAST MEETING. HE WAS THIN AND TANNED, AND
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APPEARED TO BE IN THE BEST OF HEALTH. SOMOZA TOLD WILSON THAT SINCE HIS HEART ATTACK, THE EFFECTS OF WHICH HE DESCRIBED, HE HAD NEITHER SMOKED NOR HAD A DRINK.

3. US POLICY TOWARD NICARAGUA AND HUMAN RIGHTS: PRESIDENT SOMOZA RAISED THE CHRISTOPHER COMMITTEE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AND DISPLAYED A KEEN GRASP OF WHAT IT DOES, HOW IT WORKS, AND WHO ARE THE MEMBERS.

IN THIS CONTEXT, HE SAID, HE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO REMAIN PATIENT, AND HE SAID HE WOULD BE PATIENT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. HE NOTED THAT THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON IN JAIL IN NICARAGUA WHO HAS NOT BEEN DULY CHARGED. HE STATED THAT 18 MONTHS AGO THE GON WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DEVELOPING SITUATION. THE GUARD HAD COMMITTED EXCESSES THEN, SOMOZA SAID, AND HE CORRECTED THEM. WHEN CONGRESSMAN WILSON SUGGESTED THAT THE VIGOROUS US POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS XHAD HELPED IN THE EFFORT TO CORRECT THE EXCESSES, SOMOZA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS TRUE. HE CONTINUED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SITUATION HAD BECOME ABSURD; HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED A CHRISTOPHER COMMITTEE DECISION ON RIFLE SLING SWIVELS. HE ALSO NOTED THE US VOTED AGAINST AN IDB LOAN FOR NICARAGUA WHICH, HE SAID, WAS ALL CANADIAN MONEY. THAT IS AGRESSION, SOMOZA SA E.

4. IN RESPONSE WILSON COUNSELD CONTINUED PATIENCE. HE THEN TOLD SOMOZA ABOUT DANIEL ODUBER'S REMARKS ABOUT HIM TO THE ENTIRE REUSS CODEL IN SAN JOSE. WILSON RELATED THAT ODUBER SAID THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR STABILITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA FOR SOMOZA'S HEALTH TO REMAIN GOOD, AND FOR SOMOZA TO REMAIN IN POWER UNTIL ELECTIONS. WILSON STATED FURTHER THAT ODUBER NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE ARE DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN COSTA RICA AND NICARAGUA, GOCR DOES NOT WANT TO SEE SOMOZA DISPLACED EITHER FOR REASONS OF HIS HEALTH, HIS VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE, OR OVERTHROW. SOMOZA EXPRESSED INCREDULITY AT THIS, BUT WHEN WILSON INSISTED IT WAS SO, SOMOZA APPEARED PLEASED.
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5. THE CHAMORRO MURDER: WILSON ASKED HOW THE GON HAD CAUGHT THE ASSASSINI SO QUICKLY. SOMOZA SAID IT WAS LUCK; WITHIN ONE HOUR AFTER THE KILLING POLICE RECEIVED CALLS FROM SIX DIFFERENT PEOPLE REPORTING THAT THE CHIEF PERPERTRATOR, WHO IS UNBALANCED, HAD TOLD THEM THAT HE HAD DONE IT. NOT MUCH LATER, THIS PERSON WALKED INTO A POLICE STATION TO GIVE UP. A RELATUBE WAS THEN PICKED UP, WHO QUICKLY CONFESSED, AS DID A THIRD PARTY. IN RESPONSE TO WILSON'S QUESTION "WHO DO YOU THINK WAS BEHIND IT?", SOMOZA REPLIED "I DON'T KNOW, BUT THEY DIDN'T DO ME ANY GODDAMN FAVOR".

6. WILSON NOTED THAT THE OPPOSITION VOICE OF CHAMORRO WAS IMPORTANT FOR NICARAGUA. SOMOZA'S REPLY--DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL STILL HAVE THEM AROUND (AT LA PRENSA). HE SAID THAT THE CHAMORRO FAMILY MEMBERS ARE CONSERVATIVE,BUT THAT THEY HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE LA PRENSA REPORTERS, WHO HE DESCRIBED AS "SOCIALISTS".

7. SOMOZA TALKED ABOUT PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO'S CURIOUS STATE AFTER THE STATE OF SEIGE WAS LIFTED. HE RELATED A 2 1/2 HOUR MEETING HE HAD WITH CHAMORRO'S SON AFTER THE STATE OF SEIGE WAS LIFTED. (SOMOZA NOTED THAT AT OUTSET OF MEETING YOUNG CHAMORRO MADE CLEAR

THAT HIS FELLINGS ABOUT SOMOZA REMAINED THE SAME. SOMOZA SAID MEETING SHOULD NOT BE READ AS OVERTURE OF MODERATION OR FRIENDSHIP ON PART OF YOUNG CHAMORRO.) SOMOZA TOLD THE SON THAT BECAUSE OF THE HIGH PASSIONS CHAMORRO WAS INFLAMING, SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN TO HIS FATHER AND SOMOZA WOULD BE BLAMED. SOMOZA SAID THE SON AGREED, AND THAT YOUNG CHAMORRO SAID THAT HE AND THE UNCLES HAD WARNED CHAMORRO THAT SOMEONE WOULD KILL HIM.

8. ACCORDING TO WILSON, SOMOZA APPEARED DEFENSIVE ABOUT PEDRO RAMOS' ALLEGED IMPLICATION IN THE ASSASSINATION. SOMOZA DID NOT SAY THAT RAMOS WAS OR WAS NOT IMPLICATED IN THE MURDER. SOMOZA DID SAY THAT IF ANYONE HAD A MOTIVE IT WAS RAMOS. HE SAID THAT CHAMORRO HAD TREATED RAMOS FAR WORSE THAN HE, SOMOZA, HAD EVER BEEN TREATED BY CHAMORRO--AND WITH LESS JUSTIFICATION. SOMOZA
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ADDED THAT IF RAMOS WERE BEHIND IT HE CERTAINLY HAD CAUSED SOMOZA A LOT OF TROUBLE.

9. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE LEGITIMATE OPPOSITION--INCLUDING CHAMORRO FAMILY--THINKS THAT HE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE MURDERBG
RGQPM THE DIALOGUE: SOMOZA STATED THAT PERHAPS THE GREATEST LOSS AS RESULT OF CHAMORRO'S DEATH RELATED TO THE DIALOGUE. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE HAD PREPARED HIMSELF FOR DIALOGUE WITH THE TWELVE, BUT NOT WITH THE COMMUNISTS. HE SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO LOSE; HE INTENDS TO STEP DOWN AT THE END OF HIS TERM AND NEITHER HE NOR ANYONE IN HIS FAMILY WILL SUCCEED THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. SOMOZA CONTINUED THAT IF THERE IS NO DIALOGUE, IT IS NOT HIS FAULT. HE REPEATED HE WOULD NOT TALK WITH COMMUNISTS, SANDINISTAS, OR TERRORISTS, BUT ONLY WITH CONSERVATIVES. HE SAID FURTHER THAT HE IS WILLING TO GIVE THE CONSERVATIVES ALL THEY SAY THEY WANT. IT WILL NOT BE A CONCESSION, HE NOTED; HE SAID HE PLANS TO GIVE IT ANYWAY. BECAUSE OF THE EXISTING HIGH EMOTIONS, HE NOTED, THE OTHER SIDE SAID THERE WILL BE NO DIALOGUE. WE'LL SEE, SOMOZA SAID, AFTER WOUNDS HEAL.

11. REST OF CONVERSATION DWELT ON NICARAGUAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WHICH SOMOZA EXPRESSED GREAT PRIDE.
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